GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4927
ANSWERED ON:20.12.2002
PRODUCTION-CUM-EXPORT BAN ON SEA FOOD
VINAY KUMAR SORAKE

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

:

(a) whether the Government have imposed production-cum-export ban on sea food exporting units involved in exporting consignments with antibiotic residues, which were rejected by the Spanish buyers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Seafood Exporters Association of India has represented for lifting of the ban, as there are no facilities available in the country to detect presence of antibiotic residues in seafood consignments;

(d) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;

(e) whether in response to a similar ban imposed by European Union in 1996 on seafood exports from India the Government had undertaken that it would improve the quality testing infrastructure within three years; and

(f) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY)

(a & b) : Government of India had suspended the production and export of seafood from three seafood processing and exporting units in September, 2002 on the receipt of reports of multiple contamination in respect of each unit due to detection of antibiotics and other substances from Spain. These units are (i) Hindustan Lever Ltd.,Gujarat; (ii) International Creative Foods Ltd., Mumbai; and(iii) Choice Canning Co. Ltd., Cochin.

(c & d):The seafood exporters had represented to the Government for revoking of the suspension orders. The said units were inspected by the Government agencies and advised to take effective steps, wherever necessary, to ensure quality control and standard as per norms prescribed. On the basis of satisfactory test reports of these units by a team of experts, the said suspension orders were revoked in October 2002.

(e): In the context of a ban imposed by European Union during the year 1997 on the exports of seafood from India, Government of India through Export Inspection Council of India had given guarantees to the European Commission, inter-alia, that only the units, who fully conform to the EU requirements of infrastructure, food hygiene and safety, would be allowed to export to the EU countries.

(f): Government have taken a number of steps to eliminate the incidence of rejection of consignments of seafood on account of microbiological & chemical contamination, which include, laying down the essential requirements for hygienic handling of seafood at all stages of production, storage and transport to ensure effective compliance of the quality standards; prescribing the maximum permissible level of chemicals and heavy metals; monitoring by the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) and the Export Inspection Council of India (EIC) of the processing units to ensure that required standards are followed; campaign by MPEDA and other Government agencies in all seafood producing areas to bring quality awareness among the exporters, processors, farmers, feed manufacturers, hatchery owners, etc. and to dissuade them not to use the banned chemicals at any stage; and setting up/upgradation of laboratories for the purpose of testing of seafood at major production centers etc.